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TAGA SPORTS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2019

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ROSELYN MONROYO

Manny Tenorio is already 70 years old but is still active with the Saipan Little League. Here, he umpires a game at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

If there is one thing we hope readers would take away from this edition of TAGA *Sports*, let it be the inspiring and uplifting story of Manny Tenorio on ***Page 13***.

Manny, or "Blue" (the name for umpires) has been with Saipan Little League Baseball since the early '70s. He started out as a manager/coach for one of the teams before switching to umpiring in the 1990s and he hasn't let up since then. In fact, he and his wife, Piding, are credited with sustaining the grassroots baseball program in the Commonwealth.

Manny is now 70 years old but is still umpiring Little League games. So, yes, he makes it abundantly clear that age is just a number, that keeping up with the kids playing baseball keeps him and Piding young, that passion for anything has no age range, and that we remain young when we love what we do. Manny and Piding embody it for us so clearly.

For questions, criticisms, letters, and suggestions, email them to editor@saipantribune.com and we will be sure to find space for them (Yep, even the negative ones!).

Sinseramente,

JAYVEE VALLEJERA
Managing Editor

COVER ART

Manny Tenorio umpires a Little League game at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Photography by
ROSELYN MONROYO

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SPORTS

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Writer's BLOC

MAMI IKEDA

Mami considers herself a daughter of the Koto Restaurant that was ran by her late parents in Susupe back in the late '70s to early '80s. A member of disaster relief team C.O.R.E. and the Commonwealth Racing Federation, and an advocate for the Commonwealth Cancer Association, Mami loves being a crazy cat mom and herb gardening. To reach her, email mami96950@gmail.com.

ROSELYN MONROYO

Roselyn misses "Tan Ko" Palacios and Roque Celis but, with Piding Tenorio taking care of the Little League stats and Manny Tenorio's warm smile greeting her at the pitch, she looks forward to the sport's next season and more. To reach her, email roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com.

JON PEREZ

When he first arrived on Saipan more than 10 years ago, some people thought that he came from Guam due to his last name. Jon has packed his bags and is on another adventure. Will this be his last piece for TAGA Sports? Let's wait and see. To reach him, email *Saipan Tribune* at editor@saipantribune.com.

DRE DELOS SANTOS

Dre, a Mount Carmel School alumnus, loves chocolate chip cookies and cheesecake. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at the University of Hawaii and now runs his own fitness business as a certified strength coach in Honolulu. To reach him, email *Saipan Tribune* at editor@saipantribune.com.

MARK RABAGO

Growing up, Mark's favorite superhero was Batman. He first wore the Caped Crusader's costume during a family picture when he was 4 years old. He thinks Michael Keaton is still the best actor to ever portray the Dark Knight in the movies and to this day collects Batman Hot Wheels vehicles. To reach him, email mark_rabago@saipantribune.com.

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Tofu-Burg with Ankake Gravy

My version of the simplest and easiest vegan burger! You can add varieties of ingredients to this basic recipe to make your original tofu burger patties or even tofu-balls to match your diet as well as your taste buds! Check the variation tips at the end!

MAMIIKEDA
TAGA *Sports* Contributing Writer

INGREDIENTS
for 2 persons

Tofu Patty Dough

1 pack of tofu
1/4 stalk of chopped green onion
3 pieces of minced dried shiitake mushrooms
1 teaspoon of grated ginger
1 teaspoon of Hondashi
1 teaspoon of roasted black sesame seeds
Pinch of salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon of sesame oil
1 tablespoon of panko
1.5-2 tablespoons of corn starch

Ankake Gravy Mix

1 cup of water that you soak the dried shiitake in
1 tablespoon of Hondashi
1 tablespoon of soy sauce
1 tablespoon of mirin
1 table spoon of corn starch

Prepping:

(**a**) Soak dried shiitake mushrooms in a cup of warm water until soft (15-20 minutes)

(**b**) Wrap your tofu in a paper towel, place it on a cutting board, and place a heavy ceramic bowl or plate on top of it to drain the water (15-20 minutes).

Tip: *Place your board in a slightly slanted position at the edge of your sink for faster draining.*

(**c**) Peel off the skin and grate ginger.

(**d**) When the shiitake mushrooms are soft and tender, mince by cutting them into tiny cubes. Save the water where you soaked the mushrooms in; it's got dashi from shiitake that we'll be using for the gravy later!

2 Mash your drained tofu in a bowl and add the rest of the tofu patty ingredients, and mix well with your hand, like kneading bread dough.

Tip: *Tofu softens when it gets heated, so make sure your patty dough is not too soft. If you feel your patty is too soft, add corn starch or panko (corn starch works as a glue, panko eliminates excess water and makes your patty fluffy.*

3 Shape your tofu-burger patties!

4 Heat the cooking oil of your choice with a dash of sesame oil, and pan-sear your patties until both sides are golden brown. Drain the patties in a dish when it's done, and set it aside.

WHERE TO BUY

- **Tofu:** $1.45-2.15/pack. You can find it in most Chinese/Korean stores. You can get either firm or soft, but you'll get tastier patties with soft tofu, since firm tofu uses more *nigari* (what hardens the soy milk into tofu).
- **Mirin:** $3.69/bottle. You can find the Ajinomoto brand not only in Joeten but in many Chinese/Korean stores now. Korean brands are too sweet since it's made of sugar instead of rice.
- **Dried shiitake mushrooms** ($1.19/pack) and **roasted black sesame** ($1.25/pack): You can find them in most Chinese/Korean stores.
- **Hondashi:** $4.99/pack at Joeten. You can also find it at Himawari.
- **Tempura sauce:** $3.50-4.50/bottle. You can find various brands in different sizes at Joeten and Himawari

5 Here's how you recycle the shiitake water! Add the rest of the gravy mix in the shiitake water, pour it into the pan where you seared the patties (just like how you do with your regular gravy). Heat and stir until the gravy is transparent.

Tip: *You can replace Hondashi, mirin, and soy sauce with 2-3 tablespoons of tempura sauce, for easier mix (the photo is buckwheat soba sauce. If this is what you have, then add a dash of mirin for sweetness).*

6 Pour the glazy Ankake gravy on top of the patties and sprinkle chopped green onions. Yum!

VARIATIONS

Variation 1: Tofu-Chicken Burger
Reduce the amount of tofu, and add ground chicken into the patty dough for a heartier, savory burger!

Variation 2: Sweet & Sour Tofu Balls
Make balls instead of flat patties! Roll them in cornstarch or flour and fry them in oil. Add vinegar and tomato ketchup (1 tablespoon each) to the gravy mix. Glaze tofu balls in the gravy and serve.

Variation 3: Lotus Roots Tofu-Burg
Add grated lotus roots (1/4 cut if it's a big root) and a little extra pinch of salt into your patty dough for a burger to add a hint of mochi-like texture.

More Tips: With patty dough, you can add ingredients like minced carrots, cooked hijiki seaweeds, edamame, and shelled and boiled baby shrimps. Add grated ginger into the gravy mix to give it a kick.

rules for keeping a healthy weight

DREDELOS SANTOS
TAGA *Sports* Contributing Writer

We all have those moments where we look back and think to ourselves, "I was such an idiot." »

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One of the lowest moments of my life came at the end of my junior year in high school.

There's merit in being blissfully unaware, but in May 2007, my ignorance gave birth to what very well may be the pure definition of cringe.

It was prom night and, I somehow had only five bucks in my pocket to pay for our dinner. You would think that any person in a situation like that would have the foresight to check if they're in the clear, let alone do something about it. Apparently, not me.

Here's what made it worse: *she* knew it. (I was young, oblivious, and didn't know any better)

Take a minute to imagine how seemingly arduous that night became. It was already bad enough I was dripping with anxiety—my date happened to be one of the more popular girls. But to reach down my back pocket and see Abraham Lincoln all by his lonesome self, that was adding insult to injury.

One of my friends did manage to save my behind. Although, in hindsight, I don't think it was enough to salvage my lack of preparedness and idiocy. Go figure.

If she ever reads this, I'm sorry.

You're probably wondering how does this relate to losing weight and keeping it off. One word: preparation. You should always aim to raise potential problems before pursuit.

Moving or sitting around, by nation

Physical inactivity is a global pandemic as deadly as the worst plague or flu outbreak. A massive new study reveals its scope – and points to ways of improving the world's health.

Physical inactivity

↓

Obesity

↓

5.3 million deaths a year worldwide

How so many people were studied

1 A smart phone's built-in accelerometer detects whenever the phone moves

2 Researchers collected minute-by-minute data on the steps being taken by subscribers of the smart phone fitness application Azumio Argus

The data was anonymous; only gender, age, weight known

More and less active

Some typical discoveries

Ukraine and Spain
The active Europeans

U.S.

Venezuela
Less active Latin Americans

Saudi Arabia
Low average activity
Some people very active; some quite inactive

Russia

China

Japan
Higher average activity
Less variation between most and least active people

Aus.

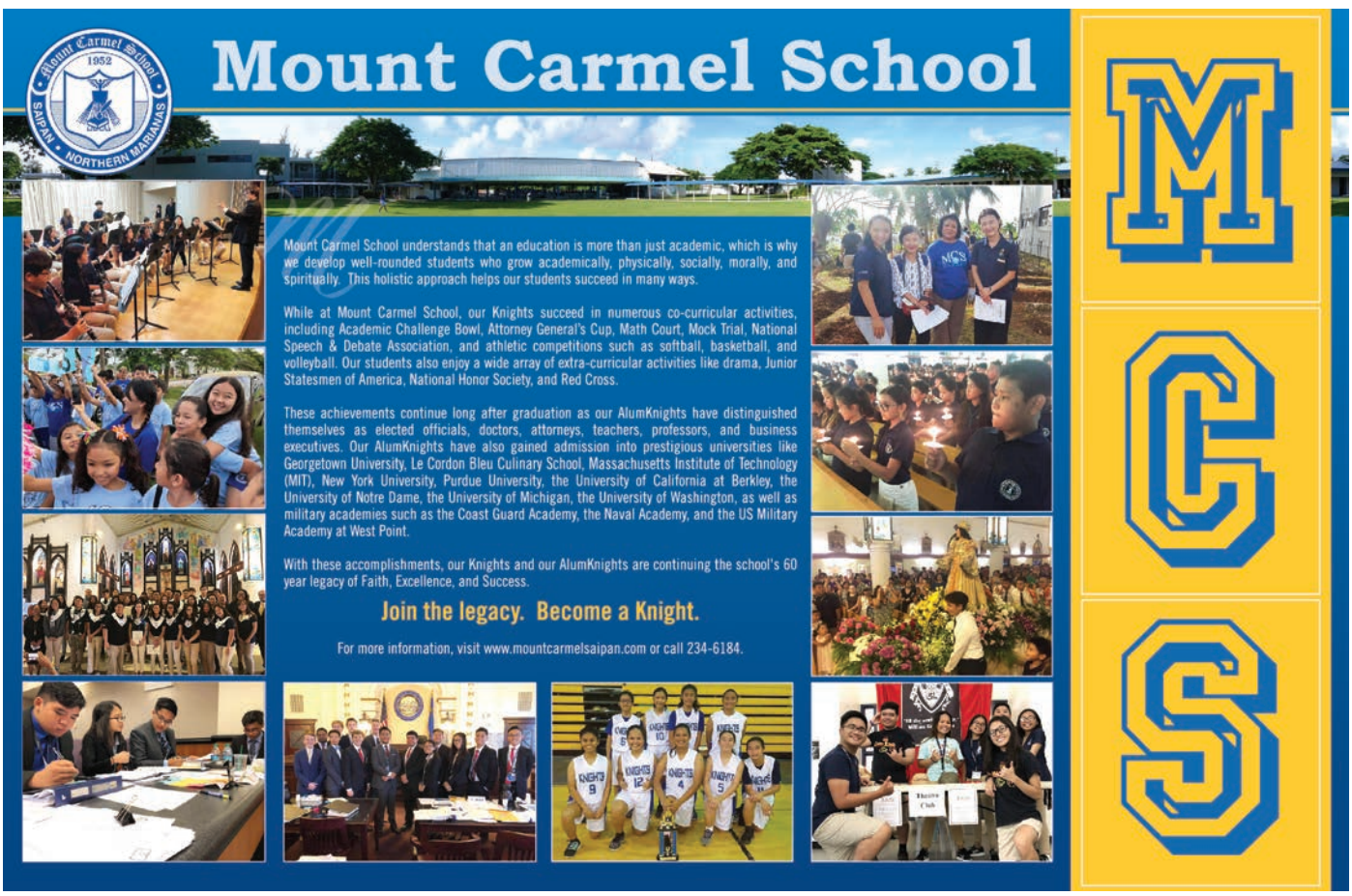
Higher obesity in Saudi Arabia than in Japan

Average steps per day
6,000
5,500
5,000
4,500
4,000
3,500
No data

Differences within a nation

The study found wide differences in physical activity between people in some nations, and in those places, the least active were women

Source: Tim Althoff and others of Stanford University; Nature magazine; TNS Photos
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service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MCS

1 'Like a horse and carriage'

If you're having trouble turning over a new leaf, I promise you it has very little to do with the training. There is a great deal of variability when it comes to each person's rate of progress as there are other nuances involved. However, in the grand scheme of things you can't out-train a bad diet.

It's easy to blame certain food groups, but the real problem is you eat too many calories.

To take things a bit further, any sort of manipulation is rendered useless if you're still eating at a surplus. While it is a virtual certainty the vast majority are widely obsessed with dietary "hacks" you simply can't ignore that, at the very basic level, you should have an idea of exactly how much you're eating. Otherwise, it won't matter.

The logistics are gloriously unpleasant, but it works.

Perhaps now may not be the best time for you to be on a restriction. Life, understandably, happens. You can still eat reasonably well, though. Remember, you can't have one without the other. Exercise alone is insufficient.

2 Pull the right strings

You're likely familiar with the adage, "Something is better than nothing."

If you had a room full of people write down their Top 3 reasons for not exercising, too busy would be at the top of the list. This certainly rings familiar. Don't sweat it, though, because it's a reality for most people. Everyone is pressed for time.

Here's the kicker: an elaborate plan isn't necessary. Fitness doesn't have to be a huge priority in your life. Arrange your training in a way that accommodates your lifestyle and schedule. 15 minutes, 20 minutes, whatever the case, you can get a lot done working with what is available to you—and building it from there.

By no means am I saying it's going to be perfect. It's not always going to be pretty, and it will feel like a drag at times. Heck, there will be occasions you'll have to work out when you don't necessarily want to.

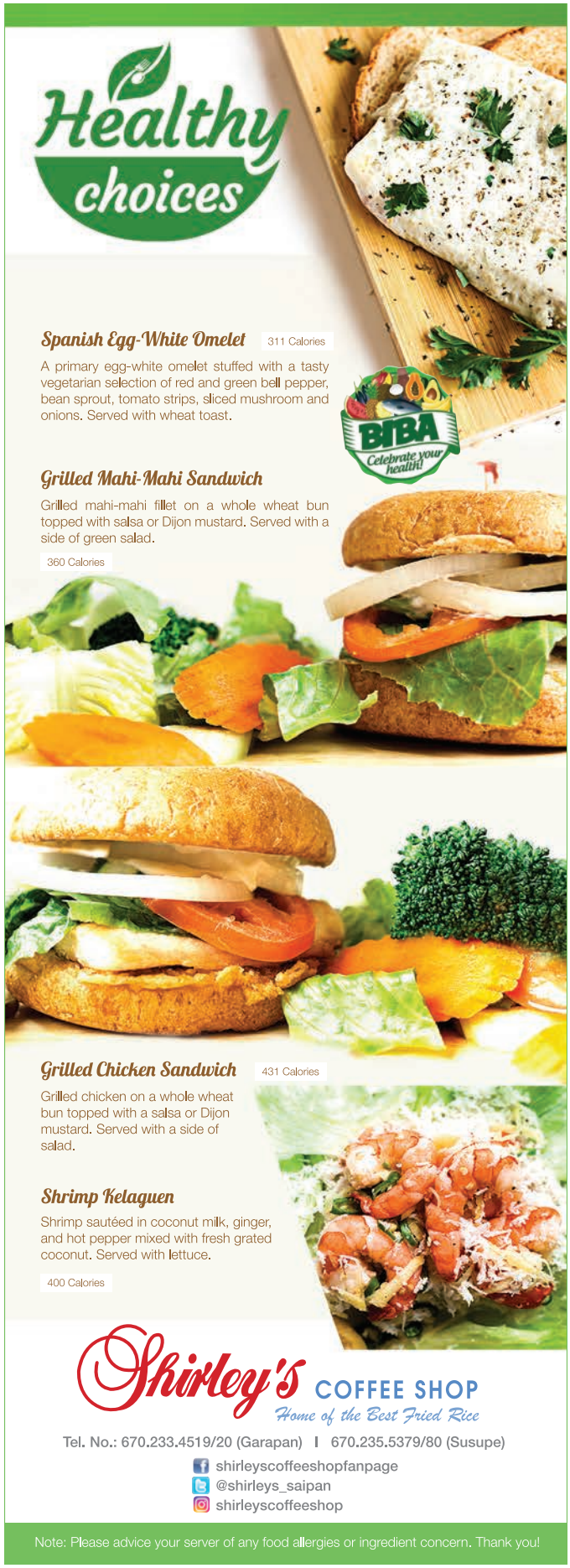
My point is, if you truly want to make it work you'll find a way to make it happen.

3 For the last time...

I'm sure you got a kick out of the predicament I was in those many years ago. Well, let me turn the table around for a moment.

With a large body of evidence, it's pretty clear that extensive supplement use to manipulate your body composition is a fool's errand. In addition, they offer very little to no benefit particularly if you're not exercising regularly. So, it's comical to think a lot of folks are still trying to sail in that direction.

As hard as it is to accept, you have to fully acknowledge it doesn't work like that. More pressingly, it's not going to happen in the blink of an eye. It's going to be hard, and it's going to take longer than you want. TG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Note: Please advice your server of any food allergies or ingredient concern. Thank you!

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TRUE Blue

ROSELYN MONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

Never mind the slightly creaky knees. At 70 years old, umpire Manny Tenorio could still squat a bit to see if a pitch is within the strike zone or not.

His abundant passion for umpiring Little League games is something he shares with his wife, Piding, who describes her more than 20 years behind the scene as "helping out."

Between the two of them, they share over 60 years of experience both in front and behind Little League games and are credited with sustaining the islands' grassroots baseball program.

One hot Sunday afternoon, Tenorio was still able to umpire a game at the Capitol Hill Ballfield for nearly two hours under the searing heat—a feat that he has been doing, spending countless hours in Little League games since 1972.

You heard it right. "Blue" (the name for umpires) has been with Saipan Little League Baseball since the program was founded in the early 1970s, starting out as manager/coach for the D-9ers before switching to umpiring in the 1990s. The septuagenarian has long retired from work (early 2000s), but not from Little League, as he spends his weekend (almost the whole day of Saturday and Sunday and on some holidays too) at the field for about three months every year.

Tenorio could just have chosen to watch the games from the comfort of covered bleachers or on his beach chair while sipping a cold drink, but that's not for him.

"I like it here, working with the kids, calling strikes and balls," said Tenorio.

CNMI Little League District Administrator James Ada said people like Manny and Piding are one of the reasons why the islands still has the grassroots program amidst the many challenges they face.

"Every year, during the Little League season, Manny and Piding come out to help us. They are an important part of the program, especially this season when people thought there won't be a 2019 season after we got hit by Super Typhoon Yutu," Ada said.

With the collaboration of SLLB officials, Saipan managed to have competitions for the Minors and Majors divisions this year. »

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Piding Tenorio double-checks the match scoresheets. **TOP LEFT:** Manny Tenorio mans the third base, as the Blue Jays' Hunter Dela Cruz gets ready to run home during their title game against the Braves in the Minor division of the 2019 Saipan Little League Baseball at the Capital Hill Ballfield. **TOP RIGHT:** Manny Tenorio looks on while Kagman Marlins pitcher Nick Sablan winds up a throw during a Minor division game in the SLLB last year at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

Husband and wife tandem

Piding is the player agent of the SLLB 2019 season and, for the past few years, has also acted as the (unofficial) keeper of the scoresheets and statistics. She coordinates meeting for the teams and officials and work on the papers of the CNMI Majors-All Star Team that played in the World Series qualifier—the 2019 Asia Pacific-Middle East Regional Tournament in South Korea.

During games, while Manny is on the field, Piding is at the press box, doing the pitching count.

"I love to help and since we're not busy at home and our children are all grown up, it's better that we come here in the field and assist the Saipan Little League and the kids playing," said Piding, who has been behind the SLLB scene for more than 20 years.

"When you see the kids playing and their parents and even the entire family cheering and having fun, you realize you are doing the right thing," Manny said.

Inspiration

Another umpire for the Little League, Mike Muña, got into officiating because of Manny.

"If he could still do it at 70, why can't I? He is my inspiration. Seeing him every Little League season [and] not minding the heat of the sun motivates me to volunteer, too. I will continue to umpire as long as he is here," Muña said.

How about Manny? What keeps him in the game?

"Those kids (pointing at the players practicing outside the fence). Every time they see me they will ask 'Uncle Manny, are you going to call our game?' I'll be here as long as I can, when my body can still hold it. In the early years, I could last the whole day, umpire two to three games. Now, I am good for two hours and spare," the San Roque resident said.

JULY

XVI Pacific Games
Over 5,000 athletes and officials from 24 countries will gather in Samoa to participate in the regional competition. The CNMI has about 50 delegates and is competing in seven sports.

35th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament
Anglers from Saipan, Rota, Tinian, and Guam vie for the whopping $10,000, which will go to the boat that will catch a marlin heavier than 942 lbs.

2019 Marianas Cup
Guam and CNMI's battle royale will be showcased anew at the Guam Football Association National Training Center in Dededo.

AUGUST

25th Tournament of Champions
The best golfers in the CNMI and in Guam plus guests from Asia will test the greens and fairways of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort for two days.

Pacific Oceania Junior Championships
The CNMI's top junior tennis players will anchor the North Pacific Team, as it plays the east and west squads in U12, U14, and U16 singles and doubles events in Fiji.

East Asian Football Federation Girls U15 Festival
The CNMI Girls U15 National Team will head to South Korea for the weeklong event that will also feature teams from China, Macau, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Chinese-Taipei, North and South Korea, Japan, and Guam.

SEPTEMBER

AFC U16 Championships 2020 Qualifiers
The CNMI will head to Indonesia to compete in the Group G qualifiers against the host country, China, Brunei, and the Philippines.

2019 NMIFA Fall Youth League
Northern Mariana Islands Football Association will hold the season-ending competition for various age groups.

2019 SPORTS CALENDAR

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

balancing act

ROSELYN MONROYO
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»

SMART PEDESTRIANS

- Walk without distractions
- Use crosswalks or intersections at all times
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing
- Expect the unexpected

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When the UPRAISED HAND begins flashing, you have enough time to finish crossing, but don't leave the curb if you haven't started crossing.

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Dai Podziewski waits for the pitch during a Senior League game in the 2017 Saipan Little League Baseball at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

You wouldn't have known it but beneath his blue graduation gown last June, Dai Podziewski also wore a pair of sports shorts and shoes.

That contrasting image speaks highly of the dichotomy that is central to Podziewski's philosophy, a balancing act where, on one hand, he graduates a valedictorian during the Marianas High School commencement exercises in June and, on the other, he is selected to play on the CNMI Boys U19 National Football Team.

Apparently, Podziewski leads by doing—showing the world that it *is* possible for a student-athlete to balance both academic and sports worlds and excel in both.

Besides finishing at the top of his class, Podziewski won two championships this year. His national squad ruled the 2019 Spring Men's M-League (the premier men's soccer league in the Commonwealth), and is preparing for the AFC U19 Championship 2020 Qualifiers that will be held in Cambodia. His local team, the MP United Football Club, reigned supreme in the U18 division of the 2019 NMIFA Spring Youth League.

A many-time national youth team member, Podziewski has had important roles in helping his squads win competitions, as he consistently plays in league matches and attends regular training sessions (he was in Japan for a training camp when this piece was being written).

The effort to juggle his time between his studies and sports is tough, no question about that, but Podziewski never reached a point where he ever considered giving up the latter for the former.

"I never thought about quitting sports for school, because sports are such a big part of my life," said Podziewski, who also plays baseball, basketball, volleyball, and rugby.

How he does it

He cites two methods in how he does it: preparation and a winning mentality.

"Preparation breeds confidence. The more time you put into practicing or studying something, the more prepared you are for the challenges you may face, which will then give you confidence in overcoming that challenge," Podziewski said.

His typical day starts with him going to school in the morning and then returning home for a quick nap to recharge before heading to the pitch to train in the evening.

"I usually do my schoolwork depending on when my training is. If training is at 4pm, I'd do my homework after I come home, and if it's at 6pm or later, I'd do my homework before training," Podziewski said.

When he is off-island—typically representing the CNMI in a competition somewhere in Asia—his schedule is more challenging, as he may miss at least a week of school and catching up when he gets back requires a lot of time and focus.

About having a winning mentality, Podziewski thinks it's about framing the issue correctly, that believing he will do well in a game is important. "As an athlete, I think that it is very important to have that winning mentality. If you go into a game with mindset that you will lose, or that you aren't a good player, you've already lost the mental part of the game," he said.

"You need to believe that you will be the best at whatever you plan to do. That is tough, because it can be difficult to be confident in yourself. But I gain my confidence by putting in the time and effort to be the best version of myself that I could possibly be."

Where he got help?

Podziewski credits the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association and the coaches he has worked with (and still do) for helping him excel.

"The best part of being on the NMI national team [is] having the opportunity to receive professional coaching. Based on personal experience, that's what separates the NMIFA from some of the other sports on island.

"We have professionally-certified coaches who have years of valuable experience coaching off-island. If it weren't for the coaches, NMI soccer won't be improving as much as it has over the past few years," he said.

Off the pitch, the student-athlete said he asks help from people around him and that lessens the burden on him. "Don't be afraid to reach out to your friends or teachers or coaches for help."

What's next?

Podziewski is college-bound after being accepted to Suffolk University in Boston, where he intends to continue his student-athlete life.

He plans to major in journalism and part of his long-term plan is to become a sports journalist. He believes that Suffolk University's location in Boston is perfect because it could give him the opportunity to cover all of his favorite sports teams—Red Sox, Celtics, Patriots, and Bruins.

He has also signed up with the school's soccer team, the Rams, who play in the NCAA Division III.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge of playing against elite competition," said Podziewski, who will be joined by fellow CNMI player Sunjoon Tenorio in Suffolk's soccer squad.

"It's amazing to think that two players from a small island will be playing for the same school. I hope we could be great role models to the next generation of CNMI players to keep playing the sport."

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The CNMI Boys U19 National Team's Dai Podziewski runs back on defense during their game against TanHoldings in the M-League at the NMI Soccer Training Center.

Rep. Jude Hofschneider (R-Saipan) pedals his way to the Bird Island.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Feature

Make laws. Exercise. Relax. Repeat.

It may not look like it but the CNMI Legislature is a pressure cooker.

Lawmakers are always expected to come up with laws to help improve the lives of their constituents in the Commonwealth and that entails much research, endless meetings, public hearings, and all the minutiae of lawmaking that add up to tension headaches and stress.

That's where activities like sports and recreation come in, not so much to create a hybrid of lawmakers who are also superstar athletes, but as a chance for them to de-stress and decompress or, for those into yoga, to re-center themselves.

Sen. Vinnie Sablan (Ind-Saipan), who started playing baseball in the Saipan Little League when he was just 10 years old, has just returned from the field where his team won the title in the masters' league.

"It's been a long time since I played the game due to many things, but it felt good to suit up and get into the field. I still had a little in me, not unlike before but just enough to have fun and compete," he said.

Playing baseball and spending time outdoors were the only options that Sablan had when he was growing up, and he was introduced to baseball at an early age as the friends he grew up with also played the sport. "Baseball was my only sport. My friends played the sport as well. We didn't have much option for recreation back then so playing sports was the choice for many."

"As a kid, we seldom stayed inside the house. We did our chores then stayed active outside, exploring and being physical," said Sablan, who added that his son has inherited his love for baseball and plays in the Saipan Little League.

Rather than playing with electronic gadgets all day, Sablan encourages youngsters this school vacation to get more involved in sports. "Commit yourself to the sport you choose. Practice often to improve your physical and mental skills. Understand your role in the game and have sportsmanship. »

JONPEREZ
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

> **as a kid, we seldom stayed inside the house. We did our chores then stayed active outside.**

Sen. Vinnie Sablan (I-Saipan) assists a batter at home plate during a tee-ball tournament.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Respect the game you play and have fun."

"There are many options today to keep you occupied but create a balance. Individual and team sports provide great experiences and lessons and you could relate those experiences and lessons to life in general. Make healthy choices for both your body and mind and exercise them both. Explore other hobbies. You may not know what you're missing and you just might unlock a hidden skill or talent. Play outside more," he added.

In the case of Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), he is making an effort to bond with his bicycle. He credits his brother, Dr. James Hofschneider, for introducing him to the sport of cycling in 2010. "Back in 2010, I' was not in the best of shape and in the best of health. I was at my heaviest weight ever. …My brother [Dr. Hofschneider] was very concerned. …I remember at that time that I was not only super overweight, but I was also having issues with my health, which was not normal for a 40-year-old to be experiencing," he said.

He still rides but not as much as he would like to. "Of course, I want to ride my bike at least three times a week. But, with our schedule now at the Senate, it's a bit impossible. I still try to have it in my daily agenda to do something—whether biking or walking or get in the water for some swimming."

He has joined several racing events or fun rides in the past and now bikes as a form of exercise and tries to be as involved in the local cycling community as possible. "I find [riding my bike] as one of my favorite things to do in staying healthy and…to relax. Believe it or not, [cyclists] also talk about a lot of issues. [Cycling] is something that others should consider as a means of exercise."

He reminded the riding public—both cyclists and motorists—to practice safety while on the road. "Let's take care of each other on the road. Although there's a law that says three feet away, if possible, we can make it 10 feet away. You know, just to be safe out there. We want to share the road so we can do what we need to do in our daily activities."

For Rep. Tina Sablan, CrossFit, meditation, and walking her dog, Rosie, a miniature poodle, keep her balanced. "I walk two or three times a day. I also do CrossFit at GetFitCNMI at least two or three times a week; on a busy week, maybe just one. I also meditate, I think that is also important in the morning and sometimes at night. Just to decompress and unwind for the day. Get out all of the stress. Keep myself sane and keep things in balance."

She usually takes Rosie for a walk at the Beach Road Pathway, but it is walking around her neighborhood in Precinct 2—Susupe and Chalan Kanoa—that she loves most. "There are a lot of dogs in our neighborhood that she likes to visit and a lot of kids too. I think the kids in the neighborhood know Rosie more than they know me. She just loves kids and other dogs. That's the funniest thing and they would call out to her and greet her. …They rarely call out to me; they might not even know my name," she added with a laugh.

She walks early in the morning before she goes to work and even tries to come home at lunch to take Rosie out and again in the evening after a long day of legislative work and other meetings. "They are not usually long walks; the long walks with Rosie are in the evening."

Vice speaker Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan), and first-term lawmaker Rep. Marco T. Peter (R-Saipan) also have their own ways to relax, hitting the fairways as much as possible every weekend. Yumul also played baseball with Sen. Vinnie Sablan with the GSM Masters and won the title a few years ago.

PONCIANO COROTAN

Feature

pocketrocket

MARKRABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

No, the blur you see running along Beach Road very early in the morning is not Sonic the Hedgehog.

Don't let his diminutive size fool you but Charlie Sendin lives up to his nickname, Pocket Rocket. This Pangasinan, Philippines-native is a veritable giant in the local running scene, having won a handful of events in the last couple of years.

The 5'2" Sendin has taken part in more than 20 races since arriving on Saipan in 2009. He finished second place overall in the 2014 Saipan Marathon despite cramping by the finish line.

The 36-year-old Sendin also topped his age group in the 50K ultra marathon in the same event a year later. In 2018, he went back to running the 42K distance and came in second overall anew, despite enduring cramps once again.

This year, the 110-lb chef of Himawari Restaurant competed in the shorter half-marathon (21K), but didn't place in his age group due to lack of training on account of Super Typhoon Yutu.

"I just wasn't able to train because of Yutu," he said in Tagalog.

This Garapan resident didn't run competitively before arriving on Saipan 10 years ago and literally didn't have any sport while growing up in the Philippines.

"I just gave it a try. I didn't really had any experience in running or any other sport in the Philippines," he said.

He made his debut in a 5K run in 2010 and simply took off from there. Nowadays, the 5K is just a warm-up for the Pocket Rocket and he now lists races of 21K or more as his preferred distances.

"Short-distance runs are actually harder. Sprints are quick-paced so it's harder to accelerate and maintain that speed," Sendin said matter-of-factly.

On a good day, Sendin makes short work of 5K runs in 20 minutes. His record for 10K events, meanwhile, is around 40 minutes.

As for the secret behind his success, Sendin merely cites self-discipline and hard training. "I also don't eat a lot," he quipped

Training means running every other day at his favorite route along the Beach Road Pathway. He does it bright and early in the morning because "the air is still fresh and it's a joy to run. Besides, it's the only free time I have as I work until the evening."

Unlike other runners, Sendin shuns any form of gadgets while running—only his trusty running shoes—but brings a power gel or two in long practice runs.

The night before he runs, he makes sure to carbo-load by eating a lot of pasta. He also stretches before and after every activity to avoid injuries.

Among local runners, Sendin looks up to master runner Manny Sitchon. Aside from running, Sendin has also taken a liking to biking and triathlons.

Sendin, who is single, said every medal and trophy he wins in the sport is dedicated to his family back home in the Philippines. TS

ScAvengers unite!

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

PSS may have successfully defended its IT&E's Race for Life crown last April 28, but the merry *Saipan Tribune* band also gets props for having an absolutely great time reveling in the once-a-year scavenger-hunt-for-a-cause.

One could say the quintuplet of myself, Jon Perez, Roselyn Monroyo, Bea Cabrera, and Kimberly Bautista set out on the quest much like how the Avengers hunted down the six elemental stones to complete their own Infinity Gauntlet in the last installment of the Avengers saga.

In lieu of the six elemental stones in Avengers: Endgame—soul, mind, time, space, reality and power—the *Tribune* crew drove to seven points on the island and performed varying tasks that ranged from the quizzical, the mundane, to the downright laughable.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The merry *Saipan Tribune* band in IT&E's Race for Life was composed of Mark Rabago, Jon Perez, Roselyn Monroyo, Bea Cabrera, and Kimberly Bautista.

As far as our characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe go, by default I would be the post-Snap lord of Thunder, Thor, for obvious reasons. Jon would be Iron Man because he has already left us for the Great White North, Bea would be Captain Marvel because, like Carol Danvers in the MCU, she's also the latest addition to the *Tribune* family, Roselyn would be the Incredible Hulk because you wouldn't want to see her angry, while Kimberly would have to be Black Widow, because, like Natasha Romanova in the movie, she coordinated our progress from the start-off point at the CPA airport field.

We were assigned seven stations from where to get our tasks. The order of who leaves the HQ first was determined by how fast you could finish a puzzle. We aced that in a mind-blowing 10 minutes and off we went.

The first stop was the IT&E office in Gualo Rai, where we were promptly told to proceed to the Kilili Beach Park where we had to answer a riddle that took us two attempts to get right.

Next stop was Shell Chalan Kanoa where we were told to mimic making a bonfire. We, however, forgot to check on the "where" and made the bonfire out of dried leaves and tree twigs at the gas station when we should've done it at the park beside Kanoa Resort. Needless to say, we had to do it all over again at the designated place much to

Bea Cabrera points at a speck that is supposed to be Managaha Island while the crew poses for a wacky picture at the Garapan Fishing Base.

BEA CABRERA

BEA CABRERA

As per the instructions, the *Saipan Tribune* crew made a sandcastle out of sand, saltwater, a plastic Easter egg, and M&Ms at Ladder Beach.

our own embarrassment.

The third location was IT&E Garapan where we were told to proceed to the Garapan Fishing Base and take a photo of Managaha Island.

Simple enough, but even that ordinary task we somehow managed to fumble as we drove to where McDonald's Garapan was, with nary a sight of Managaha. Then we remembered the jetty that extends from the fishing base, from there we did our best groupie shot with Chief Aghurubw's final resting place on the background.

From there, we proceeded to Shell Gualo Rai where we were instructed to move on to Micro Beach and film a 10-second video of two members running. Jon and I raced while gamely humming the *Chariots of Fire* theme song.

Four down with only two to go, we next drove up to our farthest destination—Shell San Roque—where we were told to proceed to Pau Pau Beach and film a video of all of us dancing.

What came next were our own versions of the *Macarena*, Michael Jackson's moonwalk, Indian rain dance, and the hype. I bet somewhere in the YouTube universe someone is still laughing at our feeble attempts of being the Baryshnikov of our dance genre.

Finally, we were down to our last location and task and we excitedly drove back to Shell Dandan, where we were ordered to make a sandcastle at Ladder Beach.

Passing by the Race for Life HQ at the airport field, our tired but still enthusiastic crew of Avengers wannabes shouted at the top of our lungs to greet Kimberly, who was probably bored to death manning HQ.

A few minutes later, we were at Ladder Beach and moseyed down its famous steps and made a sandcastle out of sand, saltwater, a plastic Easter egg, and M&Ms.

We promptly sent the proof of our finished final task to Kimberly and made the leisurely drive back to HQ, where we soon found out that we ended up not in last place.

Not bad for a halfday of not really work on a Sunday. Oh, by the way, we all went back to the salt mines a few hours later to put the Monday issue of the *Saipan Tribune* to bed.

Tony Stark would've been proud.

WHERE ARE *they now?*

DANNY

Before returning to his native Philippines in 2012, veteran cager Danny Bicera made Saipan his home for more than 20 years.

And for those two decades and change living on the island, the now 58-year-old Bicera made a name for himself in the local basketball scene as one of the best power forwards in the game.

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

He first came to Saipan on April 13, 1990, to work for the then-Nauru Building (now Marianas Business Plaza). It may have been a Friday the 13th, but Bicera deemed it a fortuitous start on a new career in a new place.

In the early '90s Saipan was a sleepy town with not much to do and it was a perfect time and place for Bicera to re-ignite his passion for playing his favorite sport, basketball.

The stamp on his Philippine passport hadn't completely dried yet when he laced up his high-tops and played at one of the hardcourts that littered Saipan.

With a rare combination of height, strength, and speed, Bicera was soon a hot commodity in the usual five-on-fives and was sought after by many teams hoping to get the next big thing for commercial tournaments.

The first team Bicera ever suited up for on Saipan was the Candelaria Team in the old Philippine Amateur Basketball Association. In no time, the 5'11" Bicera was starring in the upper-tier commercial leagues on island and winning individual honors and championships left and right.

"I really cannot count the championships [I won] especially when I was playing with coach and *kumpaire* Tony Sablan (a former representative) for commercial, masters, and even invitationals, but there were a lot. I also had a few with Country House in the PABA leagues. I also had some with FT, FT/SNE as well not to mention Pareng Boy Garcia's team," said Bicera, a fixture in mythical 5 teams four times and two MVPs—the last one in 2003 when he played for Garcia's Visminda team in the UFO basketball league.

Among the dozens of teams he played for, Bicera loved suiting up for Toyota/IT&E and FT/SNE the most.

When it came to teammates, his favorites were Ed Cosino, Ric Alegre, Jawn Joyner, Emil De Belen, Ed Palma, Banjo Basila, Pando Muleta, and Jun Estolas.

"Cosino, when he was still fast, could do everything—score, rebound, pass, block shots. Ric Alegre because he was a very smart player. Jawn Joyner is just a great all-around player. Emil because he

BICERA

was a really good defensive player and Ed Palma is a great shooter. Estolas is simply unstoppable, Basila is a go-to-guy, and Pando is just so versatile," he said.

Among the hundreds of games on Saipan, the one that sticks out for him was the time when his team played with only seven men.

"I had a lot of memorable [games], but I can't really recall them all, especially when I get to play with my friends and *kumpaires* whom I consider my second family—locals and Filipinos alike. But if I can pick one, it was a playoff game and we're really short like seven players and without our bigs. It was at the Century Insurance court and we played against the strongest team of Jun Estolas and Ehroll Peredo. We only didn't win but we won by a large margin. I guess we were lucky and had all the breaks," he said.

Bicera finally bid adieu to Saipan on Dec. 12, 2012, to spend more time with his parents and to try his luck in the Philippines.

He now lives in Sampaloc, Manila in the Philippines with his wife, Becky, who used to work at Pacific Islands Club Saipan and 360 Restaurant. The two have four kids: Kristine Dianne, 30: Kiel Daniel, 28; Dan Angelo, 25; and Denise Alisson. Among the four, Dan Angelo is the only one currently living on Saipan.

Close to seven years after returning to the Philippines, Bicera now owns a construction company with his brother-in-law. "We have a small construction business. We build and sell townhouses and do some renovations."

When asked what he misses most about Saipan, Bicera waxes poetic: "Its tranquility and scenic views. Its people and, most of all, the peace of mind it can give you even if you don't ask for it. Simple living makes it more perfect!"

While he never has second thoughts about going home to the Philippines, Bicera hasn't totally closed the door to the idea of returning to Saipan. "It was a personal choice but we do have plans on going back, preferably next year, with God's guidance. I really miss Saipan, my son (Dan Angelo), and all my friends. Saipan is my second home."

A 19-year commitment from McDonald's

ROSELYN MONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Casey Chambers waits for the pitch.

Nineteen years ago, McDonald's Saipan owner Joe Ayuyu Sr. attended a Saipan Little League Baseball meeting and offered to support a team. It was an offer that Patrick Tenorio Sr. could not resists because he had just formed a team and was looking for a sponsor.

Talk about perfect timing.

The partnership was then sealed and it has remained strong for nearly two decades, providing hundreds of kids the opportunity to play the beloved sport on island.

"The players are always there, but the opportunities to compete and develop their skills are not always available. Fortunately for us, we have McDonald's, which has been supporting our Little League program, specifically our Major team, for the last 19 years. Nowadays, it is really tough to find a company that win or lose will consistently support you," said Patrick Sr., who used to coach McDonald's, but has now turned over the reins of the team to his sons, Anthony and Patrick Jr., Nate Guerrero, and Jerald Rivera, who are all products of the Little League program.

Patrick Jr. played for McDonald's more than 10 years ago and, after missing a championship as a player, he managed to score one as a coach. McDonald's ruled the 2019 Saipan Little League Baseball after pulling off an upset over No. 2 seed Comets in the semis and against the No. 1 seed and 2018 champions, Kagman Little Legals, in the finals.

Lovin' it

McDonald's area supervisor Joe Ayuyu Jr. said they still savor the sweet taste of their first Little League title, but more than that, they love how the players, parents, coaches, and their supporters come together every weekend, bearing the heat just to be at the baseball field.

"We are proud of their hard work and dedication to the sport and the team. We want to thank the coaches, staff, and volunteers for providing guidance and discipline the players need to succeed. We would also like to acknowledge the parents for supporting their children throughout their Little League journey," Joe Jr. said.

He promises that McDonald's doors will remain open for activities like this—families and friends working together and encouraging children to get involved in sports and learn values that they can also apply in their daily lives.

Joe Jr. said their company and the Little League program share the values of respect, family, and love (for sports), making the partnership successful. McDonald's hopes to keep it that way.

"We've been here for 26 years and we plan to be here for more years to support them and celebrate our commitment to the community," Joe Jr. said.

Struggle for title

In the last 19 years, the 2019 season was one of the most challenging for the McDonald's Major team because it almost never came. Saipan had just been hammered by Super Typhoon Yutu, cutting a wide swath of destruction in key sports facilities, including the Little League's homes—the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield and the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Without these ballfields, SLLB officials and teams were initially undecided about having competitions. Fortunately, the Major

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

LEFT PHOTO: McDonald's owners Joe Ayuyu Sr., standing left, and Marcia, standing right, pose with McDonald's players and officials during a victory party at the Ayuyu's residence in Papago. **RIGHT PHOTO:** McDonald's players and coaches pose for a photo after beating the Kagman Little Legals in the Major division finals of the 2019 Saipan Little League Baseball.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Dylan Santos gets ready to pitch.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Joey Dela Cruz Jr. runs from third base to home.

division pushed through with a super-delayed start (season usually begins in February, but the 2019 games kicked off in April), while the Junior and Senior League divisions ended up as Yutu casualties.

McDonald's and five other Major teams had limited practice times and played at the Capitol Hill Ballfield, which were also used for other tournaments, forcing the league to reschedule several matches and further delay the season.

"It was a struggle, especially when teams were meeting and talking [about] how are we going to proceed after Yutu. The intent was really to have at least one or two divisions and not skip a season because we don't want the kids to lose interest in the program," Patrick Sr. said.

After every meeting, team representatives and SLLB officials were bombarded with questions from players, asking when the season will start or where they will play.

The season finally opened with the Major and Minor divisions games. McDonald's put on a show in its first game, crushing the Twins, 25-2, and finished the regular season with an 8-4 record for the No. 3 seed behind the Little Legals and Comets.

Then in the playoffs, McDonald's faced the Comets—the same team that defeated them twice in the elimination. Third time was the charm for McDonald's as this time it topped the Comets in the semis to set up a title showdown against the Little Legals.

Incidentally, it was the Little Legals that denied McDonald's entry to the 2018 finale, as the former prevailed against the latter in their semis duel, 11-9. McDonald's went on to have its payback via an impressive 16-4 victory over the deposed champions, ending the team's title drought.

Boat safety tips

PARTING Shot

It's time to brush up on boating safety tips. According to the CDC, every day about 10 people die from unintentional drowning. Drowning is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of injury death for children ages 1 to 14 years.

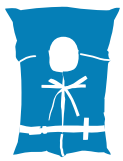
Boating safety experts suggest these tips:

Take a class; U.S. Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary teach online and classroom courses.

Check the boat and the equipment to make sure everything is operating properly before it is launched into the water.

Have a VHF-FM , or very high frequency, radio on board, which can be used to call for help; channel 16 is used for distress calls.

Travel with a companion.



Wear a life jacket.

Tell someone on land where you will be and when you plan to return.

Dress appropriately.

Keep navigational charts on board.

Check the weather forecast.

Bring water and snacks to keep you hydrated and energized.

All life jackets must be

1 Coast Guard approved

2 In good, serviceable condition

3 The right size for the wearer

U.S. Coast Guard requires a boat to have a Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V life jacket for each passenger; boats 16 ft. or longer must also have at least one Type IV throwable device.

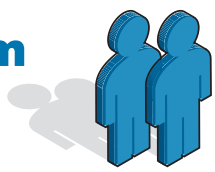
All life jackets, including those that are throwable, should be readily accessible and not stored in plastic bags, in locked or closed compartments or beneath other items.

Life jacket requirements differ based on boating activities; for instance, if water-skiing, it is recommended that you use a life jacket marked for that kind of activity.

Pool and open water safety tips

Buddy system

Swim with a friend or in the presence of a lifeguard.



Learn CPR

CPR could save a swimmer's life while help is on the way.

Supervision

Choose an adult to watch all children around water; supervisor should not be distracted with other activites.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
Graphic: Staff, TNS

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